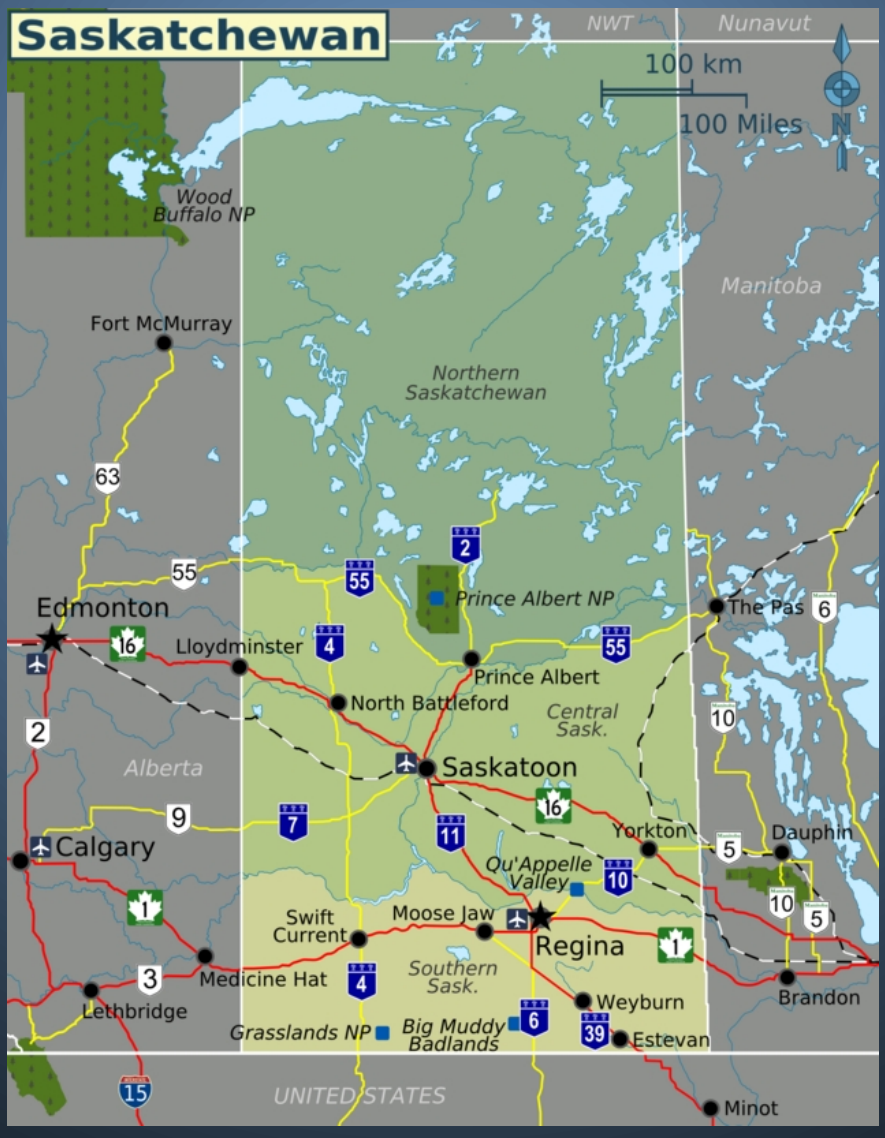
missing...

Saskatchewan: 01935-02024



https://www.services.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/missing-disparus/

BACKGROUND

My introduction to the phenomenon of missing persons was the posters on the doors in elementary school. As an adult, seeing 'Deliverance' (now a fifty-three old movie, but still timeless) & later, reading James Dickey's original novel (an excellent book for men), my interest in this subject has only grown.

Having viewed the RCMP's Canada's Missing website (see the link at the top) a few times, solely for my own interest, I have decided to produce a series of reports based on the data on this website, using a similar format to my "Graveyard Statistics" reports series.

Regarding jurisdictions, I decided to look at a breakdown of Saskatchewan first, for two reasons. For one, it is a province I have spent a lot of time in. For two, Saskatchewan has thousands of lakes, as well as being the heart of the two most prominent rivers on the Prairies, the North Saskatchewan & the South Saskatchewan. This fact interests me because, ever since watching 'Deliverance', looking through various missing persons lists, I feel that there may be a correlation between going missing & proximity to bodies of water - that lakes & rivers have a tendency to swallow people up. I will attempt to prove that in the missing... reports series.

That said, it is possible to do extremely in-depth trend analyses of datasets & come to erroneous conclusions from them. I therefore see no utility

in ranking the decades or the party in power in the legislature in Regina; I want to avoid latching on to ideas of trends that may mean nothing. Not that much other information can be determined without extensive case-by-case research from other sources; the RCMP website gives very little background knowledge to a reader, discouraging people from playing detective & possibly embarrassing our professional national police by cracking a case that they couldn't.

WHY DID THEY DISAPPEAR?

There are many missing persons cases where their fate can be assumed but not formally proven. This is most especially in the case of incidents on water bodies; there are several people in this dataset who are presumed drowned, but not formally declared dead because no evidence of their body has ever been recovered. It is pretty safe to assume that a child who falls through thin ice on a lake or river will not reappear years later under another identity in Peru. In this dataset, there are also at least two presumed murdered, but again, not formally declared dead for the same lack of corporeal evidence.

Although I haven't arranged any cases into these categories specifically, reasons for disappearance aside from presumed drowned & presumed murdered include:

- life reset/assumed new identity (either forced or voluntary)
- disassociative fugue
- wild animal attack
- medical emergency experienced in isolation

I consider kidnapping to essentially fall under the category of presumed murdered, when it comes to missing persons. I discount the possibility of kidnapped persons who were never again found of neglecting to return to their families & deciding instead to join the French Foreign Legion, or escaping their kidnapper's clutches & subsequently being eaten by a bear.

THE DATA

The oldest missing person case on file in Saskatchewan, that of the case of Anker Ljunggren, is from 01935. Writing this in February 02025, I capped the results to December 02024.

In this eighty-nine year span, 139 people in Saskatchewan are listed as still missing. (Not all were necessarily Saskatchewan residents.)

93 of the missing are men, to 46 women. Men comprise two-thirds of Saskatchewan's missing. If the odds of going missing are not random, then a woman is half as likely to go missing in Saskatchewan as a man is.

66 of the missing are listed under the Indigenous biogroup. Indigenous people are thus greatly overrepresented amongst missing persons. However, only 21 of these are women. Much has been made in the past ten years about MMIWG - however, less than one-third of missing Indigenous persons are females, apparently thereby debunking the myth perpetuated by the MMIW movement that Indigenous women & girls are disproportionately likely to go missing.

Although, as mentioned above, I did not see any utility in arranging the decades by the number who

went missing in those time frames, I do believe that there are times of year in which one is more likely to go missing, simply because of common behaviour patterns during certain seasons.

In order of most missing to fewest, the breakdown of the months in which these 139 went missing is as follows:

July: 26
June: 16
May: 14
August: 13
December: 13
October: 13
September: 13
November: 9
April: 8
February: 6
January: 5
March: 3

Before I began counting these, I expected a fairly narrow spread between the months. I was surprised that my expectation was misplaced!
It is abundantly clear that July is the most likely month a person will go missing in Saskatchewan (if a trend can be correctly interpreted from this dataset). By this trend, one is over eight times more likely to go missing in July than in March, which has all of three out of 139 cases.
Also somewhat interesting is the wide spread between missing in December & missing in January - the two neighbouring deep winter months.

Now, for the bodies of water question: are people more likely to go missing in the vicinity of bodies of water?

As one might imagine, no conclusive answer can be deciphered from this dataset alone.

Making use of the ever-handy Google Earth, & excluding (wisely or not) the proximity of downtown Saskatoon to the South Saskatchewan & downtown Prince Albert to the North Saskatchewan, I determined that fifty-seven of the 139 cases were adjacent to a lake or river. I excluded the downtown Saskatoon & downtown Prince Albert cases, because I discounted the likelihood of, during daylight hours anyways, anybody entering the water unnoticed (again, perhaps I ought to consider that possibility).

In terms of regional breakdown, the two largest municipalities in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon & Regina, each counted for 23 & 17 missing respectively. The spread between the two mildly intrigues me. When one considers the remaining 99, then about 57% of Saskatchewan's missing persons went missing in the vicinity of a body of water - as opposed to including the total of 139, in which case that percentage drops to 41%.

Other minor statistics:

- seven out of 139 cases were hospital patients or assisted living residents when they disappeared
- three of the 139 were reported to be despondent. I find this number surprisingly low, but again, the RCMP website tends to minimise the background information they provide.